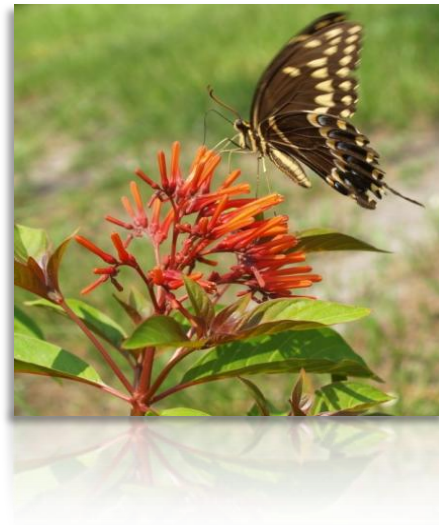
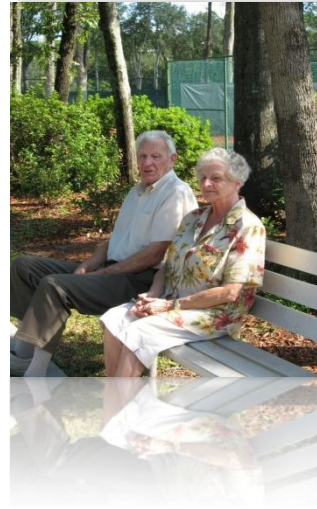


Volunteer Handbook



Achievement... A sense of **Community...** **Conservation** of our natural treasures... Seminole County's **Future...**

It Starts in Parks!

Dear Volunteer:

I would like to welcome you to the volunteer program of Seminole County Leisure Services Department. We recruit, interview, and place volunteers in a variety of positions at our various facilities. This program allows volunteers to earn student service credit hours for high school graduation, fulfill mandatory community service hours required by Seminole County Court system or complete volunteer service for their own personal benefit. Committed volunteers increase the quality of our programs and represent a willingness to improve our community now and in the future.

The volunteer program plays a major role in the operation of the Leisure Services Department. Our staff is eager to begin working with you. I would like to sincerely thank you for your generous donation of your time and experience.

This manual will hopefully make you knowledgeable about the Seminole County Leisure Services Department and answer most of the questions you may have concerning our department.

Again, I would like to thank you.

Sincerely,

Steve Waring, CPRP
Special Projects Program Manager, Leisure Services
Seminole County Government

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General Information

Department Locations

Seminole County has volunteer opportunities in numerous locations. The administration offices for Seminole County Leisure Services are located at Sylvan Lake Park. The other staffed locations are Red Bug Lake Park, Sanlando/Softball Complex, the Museum of Seminole County History and the Ed Yarborough Nature Center. A listing of all parks and park locations can be found in the Seminole County Leisure Services Guide.

Mission, Vision and Values of Seminole County Leisure Services

Mission

To enhance the quality of life for citizens and visitors by providing excellent parks, recreation, greenways, natural lands and preservation of heritage for present and future generations.

Vision

To be a nationally recognized agency for delivering excellence in leisure services.

Values – “It Starts In Parks”

The Seminole County Leisure Services Department has implemented the vision, mission and values of the “It Starts in Parks” initiative as stated by the Florida Recreation and Parks Association.

Achievement

A sense of Community

Conservation of our natural treasures

Good Health

Ties to our Heritage

A connection to Nature

Economic Development

Seminole County's Future

Leisure Services Organization Chart

Administrative Offices

Leisure Services Director

Special Projects Program Manager

Business Operations Program Manager

Administrative Assistant
Financial Analyst

Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation Manager
Sylvan Lake Park Supervisor
Crew Chief
Maintenance I
(2) Full Time Recreation Specialists
(4) Permanent Part Time Recreation Specialists
Sanlando/Softball Complex Supervisor
Sanlando/Softball Complex Assistant Supervisor
Crew Chief
(2) Maintenance II
(2) Maintenance I
Permanent Park Time Maintenance I
(4) Full Time Recreation Specialists
(3) Permanent Part Time Recreation Specialists
Red Bug Lake Park Supervisor
Crew Chief
(2) Maintenance II
Maintenance I
(2) Full Time Recreation Specialists
(4) Permanent Part Time Recreation Specialists
Museum Coordinator

Greenways and Natural Lands Division

Greenways and Natural Lands Manager
Contracts Manager
Grounds Coordinator
(4) Maintenance II
Projects Coordinator
(5) Skilled Trades workers
Natural Lands Program Manager
Natural Lands Coordinator
Park Ranger

Advisory Committee Members

15 members of the Leisure Services Advisory Committee
15 member of the Museum Historic Commission

Volunteerism

Why Do People Volunteer?

People volunteer for a wide range of reasons....They understand that it is important to give back to their communities, helping others is a way to stay active in their community; others volunteer to meet people and build new relationships. People volunteer so that they can learn a new skill and perhaps change career paths. Volunteering can be the most rewarding and enjoyable experience that people from all ages and walks of life can have!

The Benefits of Volunteering

The act of volunteering provides many benefits. The link between volunteering and health is real and tangible. Research has shown that volunteering can generate a better sense of self-esteem and confidence, reduce the heart rate and blood pressure, increase feelings of calm and well-being, boost the immune system and nervous system functioning, reduces life's stresses, and overcome social isolation. For volunteers who focus on physical activity such as coaching, working with children or maintaining trails, one benefit can include becoming more physically fit. In short, volunteering provides opportunities to exercise the body, mind and heart.

Volunteers – Who Are They?

Volunteers come in all shapes, sizes, and walks of life. Some are interested in volunteering one time while others may choose to volunteer for a longer period of time. The volunteer experience should be a “win-win” experience for the volunteer, staff, and the customer. The volunteer should be placed in positions that are meaningful and valuable. It is not intended that volunteers will replace or assume the duties of career staff; rather that the volunteer will enhance the overall goals of the program and the Department.

Volunteer – is a person who performs or gives services of his/her own free will (unpaid helper/assistant.) A volunteer, as defined in “Management of Park and Recreation Agencies,” published by The National Recreation and Park Association and sponsored by The Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) is:

1. A volunteer is someone who provides administrative support – governing on boards or advising on committees.
2. A volunteer is someone who provides direct service on an ongoing basis – leading activity programs, providing instruction, supporting special events, facilitating the involvement of participants with disabilities and coaching youth sports.
3. A volunteer is someone who will receive a job description before beginning any volunteer service.

Categories of Volunteers

Individual – The individual volunteer is just that – One person volunteering in a designated position. We welcome potential volunteer's ages 13 years (with parental permission) of age and over. An individual volunteer may serve one time or serve for longer periods of time depending on the need and availability of the volunteer. Individual volunteers who serve in a successful long term position have potential to become a vital part of your team. A volunteer takes pride in their position and may look for added responsibilities in the future.

Group – Group volunteering is a very popular trend and thus you may expect to see more groups inquiring about volunteer opportunities. Some examples of community groups may include:

- Scout troops
- Families
- Faith based groups
- Sororities and fraternities
- Teen groups
- School groups
- Neighborhood Associations
- Garden Clubs
- Others

Group volunteers may prefer long or short term projects (i.e. special events, park beautification, mentoring programs, natural land work, etc.) Group members often may have an idea/project in mind and may approach you with the concept. This is an excellent opportunity for the community to be involved in your area.

Corporate – Corporate volunteering is any formal or organized means a company uses to encourage and support its employees and retirees to volunteer their time and skills in community service. It is an array of business decisions that are being increasingly and successfully used throughout the United States to address social needs. Corporations support volunteering and are committed to their local communities.

Incidental Assistant – An unregistered person who assists with a program but does not meet the definition of a volunteer. Examples include someone assisting on game day with keeping score, timing, running the lines, snack mom, and other day of event activities where a formal volunteer is not recruited or required.

Episodic or Short Term – Episodic or short-term volunteers are gaining in popularity. There are two types of episodic volunteers. The first type provides service that is short in duration. This may include a festival, special event, or summer day camp. People come to volunteer for a pre-established time and are truly finished when the job is done or the event has ended.

The second type provides service at regular intervals for short period of times. It includes people who work on the same annual event each year for several years in a row or an ongoing project. These volunteers come to you as individuals or groups.

Advisory Groups, Volunteer Partnerships, and Friends Groups – These special volunteer groups are also very important because of the vital role they play in our everyday existence. They may take on support and advocacy in today's budgetary and policy climate. These volunteers may be members of a friends group or may serve in an advisory or advocacy role.

Community Service – These are usually mandatory hours assigned by the Seminole County Court system for minor criminal offenses.

Partnerships in Preservation – represents a coalition of citizens, students, homeowner groups, civic and business groups who share a common interest in the future of Seminole County's Natural Lands. Partners play a vital role in making the preservation of natural lands a success by volunteering their time to support a wide variety of activities and participate in:

- Projects to preserve and restore the wildlife habitats of our many wilderness areas.
- Organizing neighborhood/community groups for community service days to assist in a preserve or along a trail...
- Creating opportunities for everyone to learn about the wildlife habitats and history of our local environment... and much more!

Role of the Volunteer Office

Responsibilities of the Volunteer Coordinator

All volunteer information, including personal data, job data and background check results, is maintained in the volunteer database. The Volunteer Coordinator will maintain a file on each volunteer that returns for further assignments. This file, to be similar to a Personnel File, will include all agreements, jobs held, time cards, background reports, etc.

The volunteer is afforded the same liability protection as employees of the department providing that the volunteer works within the specific job description and meets and completes all paperwork including the timely submittal of time cards.

Recruitment Process

Getting started as a volunteer:

1. Volunteer application/Group Application – only if the volunteer is new
2. Volunteer Release/Waiver – this form must be completed each time a volunteer begins service
3. Background Check Consent Form - form (where applicable) – must be completed yearly. If the volunteer is exempt from a background check, the volunteer application and volunteer agreement form should be turned in at least one (1) day prior to the start of the program.
4. Emergency Medical Authorization Form – new volunteers
5. Reference Request – new volunteers
6. Volunteer Job Description – new volunteer or if the volunteer's job description changes
7. Volunteer Work Schedule
8. Verification of Service Form – end of the volunteers service
9. Volunteer Feedback Form – at the end of the volunteers service

Interview Process

Upon receiving applications, the volunteer coordinator or other staff will review applicants and make contact regarding available positions and arrange interviews if applicable. The volunteer coordinator or any designated staff member has the authority to select candidates for volunteer positions pending a background check.

Background and Reference Checks

Personal references from the application may be checked prior to the volunteer's acceptance into the program. Reports of any personal references must be documented and forwarded to the volunteer coordinator for filing. Criminal background checks will be required on volunteers who provide direct service. Also criminal background checks will be required on all youth sport administrative positions. In competitive sports, this means that head coaches/managers, all assistant coaches, and advisory board members or its equivalent will be subjected to criminal background checks.

The following categories are exempt from background checks:

- Volunteers serving on boards or committees, with the exception of sports advisory board members.
- Volunteer positions involved for no more than three consecutive days. These volunteer positions provide service for approximately 3-5 hours a day and generally volunteer once a year. Staff directly supervises volunteers at special events.
- Families and groups (such as scouts and Adopt-a-Land participants who volunteer their services in our nature projects, clean up and park maintenance projects and community service projects) would be exempt from background checks.
- Volunteers of our formal partners or contractors.
- Youth sports team helpers other than the head coach/manager and assistant coach(s). It will be the responsibility of the head coach/manager to ensure that anyone else assisting with the program will not be left alone with a participant.
- Volunteers providing administrative support provided they are denied access to confidential or personal information.

Volunteer Selection

Volunteers may not begin their service until completion of all paperwork including application; volunteer agreement and satisfactory background check results and reference checks.

Volunteers must be notified as to their job assignment and provided the appropriate approved volunteer job description.

Volunteer agreements and background check form must be submitted at least ten (10) days prior to the start of the program.

If the volunteer is exempt from a background check, paperwork should be turned in at least one (1) day prior to the start of the program.

Head Coach/Manager paperwork should be fifteen (15) days in advance of first practice.

The volunteer coordinator will alert staff of a negative issue on a criminal background check.

Orientation/Training

The volunteer's immediate supervisor will conduct orientation. Volunteers will receive the following materials at orientation and/or prior to the start of the program:

- Job Description
- Volunteer Handbook
- Time Cards

Supervision

The volunteer coordinator will work in conjunction with the staff to collect time cards of the volunteer at the completion of the program and record those hours in the volunteer database and file in volunteer's file. If appropriate, the volunteer will receive a certificate and/or letter stating the total amount of hours she/he volunteered. Under the direction of the supervisor of the program, another volunteer may supervise a volunteer.

Evaluation

Volunteers, at the completion of the program, may receive a written/verbal evaluation from the supervisor or their designee of the program. Copies of evaluation must be forwarded to the volunteer upon completion of the program, at which time the volunteer will have the opportunity to provide input on his/her experience with the department. The volunteer may be asked for feedback/evaluation on their volunteer experience with the Leisure Services Department.

Dismissal/Suspension

Volunteers serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority of the department (or their designee) and may be dismissed from their volunteer duties at any time, with or without cause. If the volunteer is not satisfactorily completing his/her job duties, the appointing authority for the department (or their designee) will notify the volunteer in writing of his/her dismissal. If the dismissal is a result of an unsatisfactory background check the volunteer coordinator will notify the volunteer by phone call or letter. If necessary, the manager of the division or the supervisor/coordinator for the program will contact the volunteer by phone to apprise him/her of the situation.

The supervisor, or their designee, of the program has the ability to suspend a volunteer, pending review by the Division Manager.

A database file of background checks will be maintained in the office of the volunteer coordinator.

Recognition

Volunteers truly are our most valuable resource. Once a year volunteers will be recognized and thanked for their efforts.

Internship Program

Seminole County is committed to providing paid and unpaid work – based learning opportunities and volunteer opportunities to fulfill community service requirements for high school students. The department accepts interns from both high schools and accredited colleges. The Human Resources Department requires additional paperwork for all interns. For additional information on the Internship Program please call the Human Resources Department at 407-665- 7944.

Job Descriptions – on file

- Trail Maintenance
- Parks and Museum Grounds Maintenance
- Administrative and Clerical Support
- Construction Projects
- Youth Programs
- Turtle Team
- Exotic Species Removal
- Visitor Operations/Office
- Biological Research
- Special Projects
- GPS/GIS Systems
- Nature Center Programs
- Aquarium/Terrarium Maintenance
- Events
- Planting/ Landscape Activities
- Leading Hikes
- Customer Service
- Securing Donation Funds
- Scorekeeping

- Sports/Athletics
- Historical Database Entry
- Organizing Historical Files and Photos
- Care of Exhibits
- Oral History Projects
- Museum Marketing Campaigns

Forms – on file

- Volunteer Application/Group Application
- Volunteer Release/Waiver
- Background Check Consent Form
- Emergency Medical Authorization Form
- Reference Request
- Volunteer Feedback Form
- Volunteer Job Description
- Verification of Service Form - Students
- Volunteer Work Schedule
- Volunteer Services Verification